



Testimony regarding S.B. No. 39 (RAISED)
AN ACT CONCERNING REQUIREMENTS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS.

Karen Rainville, Executive Director
Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children
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Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee,

I am testifying today on behalf of the Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children, the state early childhood professional association, regarding Senate bill 39: An Act Concerning Requirement for Early Childhood Educators.

Connecticut passed several critical pieces of early childhood legislation in the 2011 session including PA 11-54 defining qualifications for early childhood educators. SB 39 before you seeks to further amend those requirements by clarifying the parameters around grandfathering of current early childhood teachers who as of 2020 meet the Bachelor degree requirement and CAEYC fully supports this clarification. We do however have concerns about the change in language regarding who these requirements will apply to.

The current PA 11-54 states that by 2015 50% of Teachers in a **PROGRAM** will have and AA degree and 50% will have a BS degree and Early Childhood Teacher Credential. By 2020 100% of Teachers in a funded Program will need a BS and Credential. This new proposal changes that requirement significantly by stating the 50% and 100% degree requirements only apply to teachers in **CLASSROOMS** funded with state dollars. At the program level, that would mean if I ran a center and had 3 preschool classrooms funded with School Readiness dollars, 3 private pay preschool classrooms and 3 private pay infant/toddler classrooms the degree and Early Childhood Teacher Credential requirement would only be required of my 3 teachers in those rooms funded with School Readiness dollars not all teachers in my program. That change is a huge step backwards and inconsistent with our goal of creating an early childhood system for all children in Connecticut that ensures every child has access to high quality experiences.

This policy shift is also inconsistent with other standards we have already set for funded programs. CT requires NAEYC accreditation for all programs receiving state dollars; it is our proxy for quality. The NAEYC accreditation process examines systems in programs as part of their validation. Full systems, not bifurcated systems for some staff over others. That same principle also applies to a Tiered Quality Rating System which our Governor has committed to moving forward with in CT. Quality indicators in a TQRIS system almost always include standards for staff qualifications. Those standards are for all staff in programs not just those tied to a funding stream, when determining the programs TQRIS rating.

CAEYC fully appreciates the challenges for programs in meeting these increased requirements. They will need supports, access to scholarships for all staff and a funding level that allows them to compensate and retain degreed staff. That is the challenge here, a challenge CT needs to take on and figure out if we are to truly make a difference for all children in CT.